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### Lecture discusses Japanese balloon attack on Montana

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May 21, 2001

**Contact:** UM's Mansfield Library, (406) 243-6800.

### **LECTURE DISCUSSES JAPANESE BALLOON ATTACK ON MONTANA**

#### **MISSOULA —**

Few people realize that Japan directly attacked Montana during World War II. They did it by launching more than 9,000 bomb-bearing balloons that floated across the Pacific to land in the western United States. Thirty-seven of the bombs hit home in Montana during 1944-45.

A public lecture about the balloon attack will be held from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, May 29, in Room 204 of the Todd Building (attached to the University Center) at The University of Montana.

"Floating Vengeance: The Japanese Balloon Attack on Montana" will be presented by Michael Unsworth, the history and Canadian studies bibliographer at Michigan State University Libraries. The lecture is sponsored by UM's Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library, and refreshments will be provided.

Though the lecture is free, those attending are asked to RSVP by calling (406) 243-6800 or e-mailing [jerri@selway.umt.edu](mailto:jerri@selway.umt.edu) by Friday, May 25, so library staff can plan accordingly.

The balloon bombs – the Fu-Go Weapon – supposedly were launched in revenge for the 1942 U.S. Doolittle raids on Tokyo. The bombs contained an antipersonnel bomb and two

-more-



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incendiary devices that were intended to wreak havoc on American cities, forests and farmlands. The bombs landed in 17 states, as well as Canada and Mexico. One made it as far east as Michigan.

The only U.S. casualties from the balloon bombs were in Oregon, where a woman and five children died when they tried to drag a balloon bomb from the woods where they discovered it.

In Montana the bombs were discovered between Dec. 6, 1944, and July 6, 1945. They settled to the earth in communities as far flung as Kalispell in the west to Broadus in the east. The bombs landed near 33 communities, with Glen, Hardin and Laurel all getting two balloons. One landed in Flathead Lake.

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